

Resources for Health Literacy Information and Publications

The number of health literacy websites, bibliographies, publications, and other resources is growing rapidly.

Following are selected sources of information and publications about health literacy. Many of the publications can be downloaded directly from the web and also provide links to additional resources.

Overview of Health Literacy Issues

- **National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS)** and **National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL)**. The 1993 NALS did not measure health literacy, but did provide data to support the need for improving health literacy. The 2002 NAAL will include a section on health literacy. www.nces.ed.gov/naal
- **National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)**. NIFL has a health literacy discussion group at www.nifl.gov/lincs/discussions. Click the “Discussions” box and scroll down to “health and literacy” to subscribe. The Institute also funds some related programs and research. www.nifl.gov

Bibliographies

- **Health Literacy (January 1990-October 1999) Current Bibliographies in Medicine**. Bethesda MD: National Library of Medicine, NIH, 2000. Selden C, Zorn M, Ratzan SC, and Parker RM. www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/resources.html
- **Health and Literacy Compendium: An Annotated Bibliography of Print and Web-Based Health Materials for Use with Limited-Literacy Adults**, 1999 and **Literacy: A Guide to Health Education Materials for Adults with Limited English Literacy Skills**, 2000. Boston MA: World Education Health and Literacy Initiative. www.worlded.org
- **Overview of Medical and Public Health Literature Addressing Literacy Issues: An Annotated Bibliography**. NCSALL Report #14, January 2000, updated 2001. Cambridge MA: Harvard School of Public Health. Rudd R, Colton T, and Schacht R. www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy
- **“PubMed”** (includes Medline). National Library of Medicine: This website includes articles published in peer-reviewed journals. Search keywords “health literacy,” “literacy,” “readability,” “reading skill,” and the “related articles” are linked to each citation. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed

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Sources of Plain Language Guides and Materials

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Office of Communication.** *Beyond the Brochure* and *Scientific and Technical Information Simply Put* can be downloaded. This site also has publications on special populations and specific illnesses. www.cdc.gov
- **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.** *Writing and Designing Print Materials for Beneficiaries: A Guide for State Medicaid Agencies*. Order by fax at 410-786-1905. (An updated version will be available in 2003.)
- **National Cancer Institute/Office of Communications.** *Clear and Simple: Developing Effective Health Materials for Low-Literate Readers* and *Making Health Communications Programs Work* can both be downloaded. www.nci.nih.gov
- **Plain English Network.** This site provides resources, including updates specifically on health, to improve federal government communications to the public. *Writing User-Friendly Documents* can be downloaded. www.plainlanguage.gov
- **U.S. Food and Drug Administration/Office of Consumer Affairs.** This site's brochures on breast-feeding and how to give medicines to children demonstrate the variation in the quality of materials that the Food and Drug Administration classifies as "low-lit." www.fda.gov

Other Resources

- **Health Literacy Introductory Kit.** American Medical Association. Chicago. AMA Foundation, 2001. This kit includes the video "You Can't Tell by Looking," CHCS' Health Literacy Fact Sheets, "Health Literacy: Report of the AMA Council on Scientific Affairs," and materials for community presentations. The site provides information on how to obtain continuing medical education credits for using the kit. www.amafoundation.org/go/healthliteracy
- **National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care (CLAS).** This website provides information about CLAS and a guide to assist in implementing the standards. www.omhrc.gov/clas
- **Diversity Rx.** This website provides information about meeting the health care needs of multicultural populations. www.diversityrx.org
- **FirstGov.** This website offers links to government agencies and departments, by keyword or agency name, e.g., Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Institutes of Health, and Office of Minority Health. www.firstgov.gov

Education and Training

- **Health and Literacy Studies Program: Harvard School of Public Health.** [Note: Most schools of public health offer courses relevant to health literacy in their health behavior, health education and/or communication programs.] www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy
- **Health Literacy Center.** Based at the University of New England, Biddeford, Maine, the Health Literacy Center offers a four-day Health Literacy Institute on writing plain language health education materials. www.une.edu/hlit

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